



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE OF HAWAII
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PRESS RELEASE: SMALL BUSINESS CAUCUS

Rep. Angus McKelvey, Co-Chair, House
Rep. Gene Ward, Ph.D., Co-Chair, House

Sen. Carol Fukunaga, Co-Chair, Senate
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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SMALL BUSINESS CAUCUS PACKAGE FOCUSES ON JOB CREATION AND RETENTION

The Small Business Caucus today introduced its legislative package for the 2010 Legislative Session. The bipartisan group, co-chaired by Rep. Angus McKelvey (D-10, Lahaina, Kaanapali, Kapalua) and co-founder Rep. Gene Ward (R-17, Hawaii Kai, Kalama Valley), aims to pass legislation that will support small businesses in Hawaii.

The 2010 package is designed to improve the economy and reduce the state's over 7 percent unemployment by helping local small businesses operate and survive in Hawaii. Included are solutions that help companies obtain permits and retain their workforce.

- HB 2209 would encourage small businesses to develop patentable energy-saving technologies for Hawaii by establishing an Energy Innovation Award.
- HB 2210 and HB 2212 would help small businesses with obtaining permits, licenses and other approvals from state departments and agencies.
- HB 2211 would establish a voluntary work sharing program to help small businesses retain their workforce by allowing employers to retain their staff with reduced hours and pay while the state provides unemployment compensation benefits equal to a percentage of their wage reduction.

Of the "Work-Share" Bill, McKelvey said, "Instead of firing people when things are slow, businesses can reduce hours and pay while the state helps make up the difference in lost wages that would've gone out in unemployment checks, anyway."

- HB 2213 would help small businesses bid on and win federal contracts in Hawaii by providing training and technical assistance in obtaining surety bonds and liability insurance, giving them the means to employ highly trained, local employees.

Ward believes this bill in particular will bring many more jobs into the State. "The federal government is the largest contributor to Hawaii's economy if you combine its military and non-military expenditures, pouring \$13.5 billion into the state annually," Ward said. "Unfortunately, most federal contracts aren't awarded to local companies. If we help our businesses compete and win more contracts, we'll expand our economy and increase our tax revenues."

In addition to this package, the Small Business Caucus supports bills, like HB 2201, to reduce the mandated increase in the unemployment insurance tax, which is scheduled to jump to \$1,070 from \$90 annually for each employee.

These bills will be heard in committee over the next few weeks. The 2010 Legislative Session ends April 29.

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